

Corresponding Voices

Volume 6

Josefina Baez
Cynthia Cruz
Annie Marshall
Paula Jiménez



Point of Contact
Productions

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Edited
by
Pedro Cuperman



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Contents

<i>Poesía(s)</i> Pedro Cuperman	9
<i>Poetrie(s)</i> Pedro Cuperman	11

Josefina Báez

15
16
17
19
20
21
22
24
25
26
27
28

Cynthia Cruz

<i>NEBENWELT</i>	33
<i>THE BIRTHDAY CEREMONY</i>	34

<i>HOTEL OBLIVION</i>	35
<i>MAGICAL</i>	36
<i>KINGDOM OF CLUTTERING SORROW</i>	37
<i>OUT OF THE DESERT HOSPITAL</i>	39
<i>SETTING FOR A FAIRY TALE</i>	40
<i>DEATH: THE PROJECT</i>	42
<i>THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM</i>	43

Annie Marshall

<i>Visitor</i>	47
<i>Infection</i>	49
<i>Seven and a half years, They had me Wait</i>	49
<i>The Inside</i>	50
<i>Someone's Sister</i>	51
<i>Appear</i>	52
<i>In a Big House</i>	53
<i>Mary</i>	54

Paula Jiménez

<i>San Juan</i>	58
<i>San Juan</i>	59
<i>Camino del cuadrado</i>	60
<i>El Cuadrado Road</i>	61
<i>Desierto</i>	62
<i>Desert</i>	63
<i>Reserva natural</i>	64
<i>Natural Reserve</i>	65

<i>La pareja</i>	66
<i>Two Lovers</i>	67
<i>Coroico (donde no fuimos)</i>	68
<i>Coroico (where we haven't been)</i>	69
<i>La garganta del diablo</i>	70
<i>The Devil's Throat</i>	71
<i>Japón</i>	72
<i>Japan</i>	73

Poesía(s)

Pedro Cuperman

Ya casi no hay mayor desafío, o riesgo, que utilizar la palabra poesía. Y uno de esos desafíos –el de evitar volverse un sustituto de la información, o de la exclusividad pedagógica– lo vive y lo vivió la poesía desde siempre, desafío que en algún sentido la define y alimenta, marca su diferencia, y su lugar en el mundo.

En un mundo dominado por el individualismo y la exclusividad, la poesía parecería querer ser lo otro -su negación, lo que informa a la vez que deforma, o transforma, ya sea en la página escrita o en *la página en blanco*, al decir de Rimbaud.

Las antologías y colecciones, es cierto, viven de la integración de voces, estilos o periodos diferentes. Pero esas enumeraciones no siempre se complacen en la reducción pedagógica de las diferencias; son más que nada un mosaico de las pluralidades dialógicas de que fue y es capaz la poesía.

Las antologías de alguna manera siempre quisieron ser la respuesta a este desafío.

Corresponding Voices, Vol. 6, integra una serie de discursos poéticos que transmiten mundos verbales en proceso. Las palabras no informan, *performan*. De ahí que su valor de información pase por el carácter vivo de la palabra y sus relaciones, y no sólo por las interacciones entre los distintos significados. La edición, además, quiere ser una *poética del riesgo* y de la inclusión: al negarse a reducir se niega a comunicar un sentido único a la selección de los poemas incluidos.

Solo predomina la actualización verbal a partir de la página.

Cuatro voces distintas y distantes. La variación sería banal si no pusiera de manifiesto una de las grandes virtudes de la poesía contemporánea: la absorción casi voraz, se diría, de técnicas y estilos, a veces de herejías retóricas, maneras de decir o desdecir. La poesía como diálogo y desafío.

Poetrie(s)

Pedro Cuperman

There is almost nothing more dangerous or challenging than using the word *poetry*. And one of the dangers –that of words becoming surrogates for pedagogical information or exclusiveness– is a challenge the *poetry* has always posed and which, in some way, defines or indeed fuels the noun, setting its difference, its place in the world.

In a world dominated by individualism and exclusiveness, poetry seems to want to be something else –the opposite, that which at once informs and deforms, or transforms, whether on the written or on the “blank” page, as Rimbaud used to say.

Of course, the very life of anthologies and collections depends on the integration of different voices, styles and periods. However, such compilations do not always result in a pedagogical reduction of differences; more than anything, they create a mosaic of poetry’s past and current unique potential to generate dialogic pluralism.

Anthologies, in some way, have always tried to be the answer to that issue.

Corresponding Voices, Vol. 6 integrates a series of poetic discourses that display spoken worlds in process. Words here do not inform: they *perform*. This is why the value of the information lies in the dynamic nature of words and the way they are linked to each other, not only in the interactions between their different meanings. Likewise, this edition wants to be a *poetics of risk* and of inclusion: by refusing to reduce it also refuses to attribute one sole meaning to the selected poems presented here.

The only thing that prevails is the verbal actualization of words through their written presence.

Four different and distant voices. Variation would be insignificant if it did not reveal one of the greatest virtues of contemporary poetry: the compenetration –one could almost be insatiable– of different styles and techniques, sometimes even of rhetorical heresies, of different ways to say and unsay. Poetry as a form of dialogue, of challenge.

JOSEFINA BÁEZ

...No way jamás ni never no way
Gosh to pronounce one little phrase one must
Become another person with the mouth all twisted
Yo no voy a poner la boca así como un guante.
Don't get me wrong yo se un chin yo me sé
Girl loves you Me Tarzan you Jane
You me mine love you do does and doesn't
Been very very very good
to me mine myself
An' da' si.

From Dominicanish

Quizás se llama Jahaira, Jessica, Yesenia, Jennifer,
Isha, Aisha, Ashley, Michelle, Chantelle, Tiffany,
Stephanie, Melody, Nicole, Destiny, Ambar.
Katuska, Ninoska, Veruska. O Yaneris, Yuleidys, Yubelkis, Orlidy,
Isawil, Marnel. Phoebe, Chloe or Zoe.
Uno de esos nombres de las niñas de la migración.
Lo que sí sabemos es que es 1ra generación.
High school? GED.
Con 27 años de edad
Cumplidos vividos
viviendo viviendo
27 pa' 50.

Ella:
¡Whatever!
But in terms of my name...
none of the above 'mija.
I am pure history. Mira. Seat.
Seat and listen.
My name is Quisqueya Amada
Taína Anaisa Altagracia Indiga.
You can call me Kay.
El cocolo, mi timacle, calls me
chula. He calls me Chula and his
derriengue. And the rest Gorda.
They call me La Gorda....

Mom I found your past. Your past, in this huge bag. Oh My!
 Encontré una funda shopping bag de Alexander's con otras fundas
 mas chiquitas adentro. Una funda con muchos sobres manila y blancos.
 Otros sobres que ya no están blancos. Sobres color cobre sujetos con
 su goma o unas cintas.

Fotos. Fotos. Un truck de fotos.

2 X 2 4 X 6 5 X 7 8 X 10 11 X 14

Polaroids instantáneas (people there faded as fantasmas)

B & W color con bordes como montañitas Fotos de allá. De aquí. Una
 cucarachita disecada. Pétalos de flores resecos.

Actas de nacimientos. De muertes. Pasaportes viejos. Color indio.

Señas particulares ningunas. Pasaportes rojos. Countries for which this
 passport is valid .Todo el mundo. Este pasaporte no es válido para viajar
 a Cuba, China comunista, Rusia y demás países satélites de la órbita
 soviética. Cancelado. Cancelado. Cancelado.

Con sus tres moñitos. Sentada en un pupitre que tiene a su derecha
 a la tierra en globo (sólo para la foto). Con lápiz en la mano, como si
 estuviera escribiendo. Mirando al frente. El uniforme es una yompa y
 blusita de cuadritos. Background pintado. Foto B & W. La foto todavía
 está en un marco de cartulina blanca. Un paquete sin usar de Letras Set.
 Fyers de una gira a la Montaña del Oso. En verano en Nueva York, como
 cantó el Gran Combo.

Fotos de cumpleaños. La festejada en el medio y un montón de
 muchachitos alrededor. Bizcocho en forma de regalo. Bizcocho con una
 muñeca. La falda de la muñeca es el bizcocho. En la tabla donde está el
 bizcocho hay bolitas chiquititas de plata. Grajeas (gritó mi mamá desde
 el baño). Más fotos de cumpleaños. Los mismos invitados. Peinados
 iguales. Vestiditos iguales. En la mesa hay unos tubitos con flequitos
 en cada borde. Imagino que estarán llenos de dulces. Más fotos de
 cumpleaños. Ahí está la afamada mujer flaca de los cumpleaños. Con una
 bandeja. "Quien no baile no le doy bizcocho".

Look at yourself Mom. La primera comunión. 'Taba guapa?

Ahí me parezco mucho a usted. Ay Diooooo.

Miren a Mamá, que orgullosa el día de que su hija oficialmente se come el cuerpo de Cristo.

Con botas, mini faldas, camisas de bolas, con un recorte como los Beatles. Esos ojos muy bien delineados. Y una carita de muchachita buena.

Boys Scouts. Y las Guías.

Un grupo de jóvenes. Flaquitos todos. Muy elegantes. Sentados en una mesa laaarga. 5 toronjas llenas de palillos con queso o quizás salchichón. Todos miran a la cámara. Menos el jabao que miraba a mi Mai. Se la va a comer. Ofréjcome.

Mamá con su neceser y el avión de Pan Am en el background. La doña estaba entera. Que piernotas en sus medias finas. Y un suit. Como una viajera tutumpota.

Una enrrama'. Una fiesta. Los mismos jovenes de la otra foto. El tipo sigue mirando a mi mamá como que si se la quisiera comer con los ojos.

From Levente no. Yolayorkdominicanyork

“Good Dreams wake me up with precise poems.
Pomegranate seeds
On my lover’s torso.
Religion versed naked”

Los sueños placenteros me despiertan con poesía precisa.
Semillitas de granada esparsidas
y dejando huellas en el torso de mi amante.
Esta es mi religión.
La oración me desviste.
La oración lo desviste.
Esta es nuestra religión.

I saw you.

I saw you in the sunset.

I saw you.

I saw you as a sunset.

Atardecer. Te vi. En el atardecer. Tú.

From Comrade, Bliss ain 't playing/Canto a la plenitud

“¿Ojos o estrellas?

En esta foto...

Los ojos más lindos que yo he visto.
Estos ojos son los que hacen estrelladas las noches en Andhara.
Velándote luego el sueño que te sorprende en la azotea,
disipando el calor,
mientras buscas en la inconsciencia
los enredos de siempre.

“My guard’s eyes are a poem”

In this photo...

There are those eyes; the most beautiful eyes that I have ever seen. These
eyes are Andhara’s starry nights makers.
They watch your sleep.
They accompanied your dreams to dance in the veranda.
They, somehow, fan the summer heat while your unconsciousness tries
to dive into the known sweet dirt.

En Tren
Desde Agra
Hasta Hyderabad

Sólo él me miraba. Me miraba y me sonreía. Me miraba directamente a los ojos. Su mirada lo acercaba a mí. Vestía un sari Amarillo mostaza. Otra vez mostaza. Un Amarillo escandaloso. La piel mostraba una dureza que no tenían sus ojos. Impulsivamente, el enuco se sentó a mi lado. Me tomó las manos y me dijo “ni a ti ni a mí nos quieren aquí. Y seguimos viviendo”. Desde el final del compartimiento de este tren con rumbo a encontrar al Índico, salía una voz que traducía la verdad del enuco. Era la voz del ingeniero que conocí en la estación. Quien todavía no miraba a los ojos. Traducía como en letanía. Como si dijera un mantra. Como pensando en voz alta lo que no era su pensamiento. Era la acción en estéreo, La suavidad en su decir contrastaba enormemente con el fulano amigo mio. Quien con una carcajada, que comenzó forzada, fue el punto y aparte de su frase. Seguía riendo a carcajadas. Carcajadas, que maltrataban el pudor ajeno. Ajeno y falso. Sus pulseras amenizaban sonoramente el desquite. Mi cómplice solidario se fue como vino. La voz traductora se silenció. Sus ojos nunca miraron a los ojos míos. El rumbo sigue al sur. Por ahí pa' bajo. A mil a veces. De a poco, muchas. Entonces me entretenía mirando por la ventanilla. Veía a hombres en cuclillas cagando, mujeres poniendo estiercol al sol y niños correteando. Dormí. Llegue con más historias a mi destino.

Then, I stared at the window. Passing thru, looking at a group of squatting men shitting, women setting cow dung to dry and children running. I felt asleep. I arrived full and filled with stories. I arrived to continue my story.

From Agra to Hyderabad

He looked at me. He looked into my eyes. He looked and smiled. In fact, he was the only one using his eyes truly. Dressed in a very bright yellow sari, his face portrayed a harshness absent in his eyes. Suddenly, the eunuch sat next to me. And holding my hands he told me what I already knew. "Nobody like us here. And you and me are happily alive". While he loudly said the obvious, a voice translated the fact. It was the voice of that civil engineer that I met buying oranges in the station. A soft voice in the middle of this crowded train heading down to the south. Down to meet the Indian Ocean. He who said that is not safe for a woman to travel by herself these days. He was the echo of the action. A monotone voice. Like a prayer. Not looking at me. Not looking at anybody. But translating the eunuch strident anthem of truth. My intense friend laughed to end his phrases. He laughed so thunderous that badly hurt the cowards, the racists and the dishonest traveling in the train accompanied with their aloofness. His bangles cheered his unveiling act. He left as he came.

Then, I stared at the window. Passing thru, looking at a group of squatting men shitting, women setting cow dung to dry and children running. I felt asleep. I arrived full and filled with stories. I arrived to continue my story.

Now that he uses bangles for you
for me he knows by heart and touch
the route to the Goddesses' spot
driving
delicious detours with his tongue

Aquí es un insulto decirle a un hombre que usa pulseras
Timacle mi amante las usa
perlas cobre Madera plata
lo guían sigilosa y deliciosamente
a adivinar mis deseos
a tocarme
donde florezco

Sleeping in history
Framed by highly crafted wood
A 150 years old bed
High as certain regards
Tames known pace

Por dormir en la historia
Por dormir en una cama añejada en 150 años
Hecha con detallada artesanía
La Madera susurra.
La cama es alta
 como algunas estimas o como la del enano.
El susurro domestica la prisa

**From Una Dominican York en Andhara/A Dominicanyork in
Andhara**

Sunset setting the mood
Sweet cold sticky
I'm immersed in your favorite beverage
Sweet sticky I stay
My body as always obedient to song sang in whispers
Soul at home humming the lost of
Conscience anthem

Still I stayed
while your beverage now warm melts

Sacred suppleness
Still I stayed

Preened with pearls
enchanted neck and earlobes
inviting you to lick me
Your tongue
as that of a Maori in the midst of a Haka
covering a part of me
me feeling myself entirely covered

Now you are talking
I meant now we are not talking
I meant we are really talking
Nego, Did you swallow one of my earrings again?

I got a white horse.
Many years in hiding.
A horse at home
A horse at home in the tiger's shoes.

At home

Me ve

Me ve at home y babea
Bailo relincha

Trabaja fino ridding a pleasure
Caribbean amazona
on top como la cherry
ridding a sure pleasure

Ni hurdles ni trotting fuera de su jurisdicción
cabalgamos sólo en downtown turf stable

Entierro la vergüenza no muestro la evidencia
yo que by all means if necessary no "adelantaré" la raza.

Uptown deep-fries his freckles
Uptown
Where if by myself I'm invisible to the tigers
And in downtown invisibility is law.

From Cardamom and other spices

CYNTHIA CRUZ

NEBENWELT

Quarantined inside a wonderland of endless
Dream: waiting on horse back, at the gate
Of a Dostoyevsky mock death, milky reverie
Of the guillotine. And a room of green and
White coconut cream layered cakes, an infinite
Winter inside them. A childhood of illness.
The moon was the only nurse I knew.
At the shore, I rode a little rowboat
Out to the end of the world. I found the kill
And entered it. The owl and the pussycat
Rowed in a yellow boat into the gleaming.
Crept out of the playroom
Into the aquarium: Vienna, Salzburg, mildly
German. Mother's cabinets and jewelry boxes.
My small white hands dripping in amethyst,
Pearls, and aquamarine. Woke on the floor
Slept there, wept there, inside its envelope
Of drowning.

THE BIRTHDAY CEREMONY

Seventeen rooms of long maroon
Tables, of endless

Raspberry cream cake,
Cheap California

Champagne, and stacks of magazines and childhood
Photographs

On the pale pink plush.
White as milk, and cold

As the hand of God,
That locked empire

With its slumber of ghosts, its dead
Engines.

The uncanny
Always comes back.

What white darkness: pearls,
Porcelain, and medicine.

The mansion of childhood
Is shattering.

A sentinel, I stand at the entrance
To the burning fortress.

HOTEL OBLIVION

At Hotel Oblivion, the snow
Goes on for days. A small saga,
Its secret voices bloom against the rotting.
The rooms are painted mint green
Frosting. The men are handsome.
They wear wool blonde suits, take opium,
Ride white horses in a flood
Of bloodhounds, vanishing into the crushed
Black spider of the forest. It hurts
To look at us. Afraid, we mask our faces
In glam make up to ward off the invisible.
Wear ancient Warhol wigs and Red
Falke or Fogal stockings. We are promiscuous
In our thinness, don't leave the green mansion,
Are trapped inside the snow box, noiselessly
Splendoring. Outside, the bright pines
Weep, electric diamonds, and stars. At midnight
Supper is served on delicate Dresden
Porcelain: lamb and endless French
Macaroons; Vermouth in small Crystal goblets.
When the men return, they let loose
Their horses. Nomadic, they wander
Back defeated to the fortress, broken,
All of this vast collecting, this glamorous
Danger and doom.

MAGICAL

Wallpapered the white walls
Mint green stripes

With miniature yellow tigers
Aiming their woolen, precise

Bodies through the halos
Of hula-hoops.

At the hospital the nurses
Don't know the riddle, how

It's unraveling. If I say
The word baby a hundred times,

Then please,
Can it be real.

KINGDOM OF CLUTTERING SORROW

Another helping of champagne
Cream cake: stacked and beveled,
A miniature cathedral smashed,
Soft white box of sugar and glitter.

Outside, meanwhile, the beige Mercedes
Arrives, its seats of soft red leather.
Its driver, the inventor of sorrow
Takes me across the dead
Zones, and bridges
Of America, its eternal labyrinths,
Interlocked, and without meaning.

A collapsible cage
Flocked golden and framed
In wet black lacquer.
And voluminous: dawn's
Museum of stars.

Masked and gowned, I make
My way down
Sokurov's Grand Staircase
Leaving forever behind
The dark kingdom of clutter.

At night the ambassadors arrive
In a ceremony of silent
White blizzard. Carrying goblets and rabbits,
Dragging bags of chain letters.

It's true,
I come from the
Tricked-up hospital

Of beauty and ruin.

I am frozen forever in this wonder
Room, this zoo of one million
Diamond machines.

Come with me into my blonde room
Of music.

Self Portrait as Marilyn
In the Final Sitting.

OUT OF THE DESERT HOSPITAL

Awoke in cobalt blue
Fogal stockings, and Kiss
Stage make up, inside a bathysphere
Of wounding music. A mansion
Of German, rooms of strudel, and quadruple
Layered raspberry cream cakes.
Starve the shame down to androgyny
And numbness. Beige plastic trays
With my name engraved on them.
A rabbit-eared radio in the cabin is transmitting
The parade of the dead. Dazed, I've lived inside
This adored orphanage, this sorrowful
Wunderkammer. Always gleaning or wasting in its
Accumulating. Darboven panels and a handbook for
Cataloguing the stars. Glam and gloom, a diamond
Gold necklace wrapped around my waist.
In drag, embellishing, collecting, then
Deconstructing to stop the brutal onslaught.

SETTING FOR A FAIRY TALE

Cold, grey, Gogol-dawn
All day.

And outside the glimmering
Palace,

Inside the perennial garden,

Among the blazing
Flags, the lights

Of the turrets,
Blinking

Into the strain
Of the twenty-first century—

The parade of names
Race past me,

And my life

Blooms
Into the glass scope:

Small and empty
As everything

God
Left here

In this sad
Dead world.

I am moving
You should know-

Nearer
The beautiful

Clear windows
Of the glimmering hospital.

DEATH: THE PROJECT

Am Steinhof, or the Wagner
Jauregg Hospital in Linz.

Driven to Trauersee, alone
In a beige Mercedes taxi

Whispering Bachmann, the radio
Broadcasting races from the Autodromo in Monza.

Through the woodlands of hurt
Foxes, green grasses, and red and yellow birds on telephone wire.

To the coast of Genoa, and its pearl-
Black ocean, its murk,

Mysterious like the jewel-white
Magnets of radiating madness.

THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM

Over the Orinoco
Through the black fields
Of what once was Eden.

A queen in a glass
Palanquin,
I slept through the burning

And was laid flat on the grass
Like a child
Dragged in from the ocean.

In the morning, three singing women arrived.
They slit open the lung of my belly.
But there were no babies inside,

Just green sea foam and jewel
Encrusted earthworms.
These words, this terrible song.

ANNIE MARSHALL

Visitor

There is a visitor
to everyone you think you know-
they have a visitor
who is sneaking out the back door
to make room for the visitor just walking
inside, quietly placing their jacket over the railing
and removing their shoes
the same visitor who leaves you
with a tremble in the night as you
jostle awake to the sound of the door shutting
behind them
the visitor who leaves a flower
as a thank you,
a visitor who is your visitor,
on their way to be someone else's.

Infection

The patient wasn't old
the look on his face was
tired when the
bandage was removed
and there was a
chilling reminder of
the man's eyes
when he changes his
mind one day and
not even his daughter
knew why
it was first only
a small red circle
but when the foot went numb
the head soon followed
suddenly the face
went faceless
and they knew that he was
hardened. incurable
with satisfaction in his expression.

Seven and a half years, They had me Wait

I will never forget sitting with four other men
believing my captors would realize their mistake
then with a tube up my nose,
it all became excruciatingly clear.
My family thrown into poverty
their letters were returned
“undeliverable”
not because they were dangerous
their messages:
secret information, I never saw or heard.
These are the things I don’t want to write about
90 prisoners and America will not give a home to one of them
innocent men remain
and though the government ordered me free,
I will never forget sitting with four men
in a squalid room, at Guantanamo.
A letter to those men
censored- out of my head -
feverishly, I write,
and they still wait for their seventh and a half year
as it drags into their tenth.

The Inside

It's the way you can feel dawn
in the evening
and give it to someone else.
It's there suspended in our homesickness
and if we stare hard enough,
we'll never forget what we are looking at.
I want to be able to tell you
exactly what it looks like
when an article of clothing
turns into a memory, sagging
in my hands the instant that I pick it up,
and has me desperate to restore a laugh.
That same laugh, at that particular table
and you in that certain shirt.
To have it circle me like a ghost
or to relive it in a cry
that dries out my mouth
and whimpers at me like a ghost.

Someone's Sister

Never let your phone die or else they'll get foul, and you might miss something important. Be available and learn how to put yourself last. Talk sensitive and only think with resentment. Remember to ask about everything before a single question falls concerning you, be honest but never tactless and only speak of your quality in regards to your effort in reading and studying. Make sense out of who you are, for their sake, pretend to have if need be. Don't speak of the extra effort that goes into tricking yourself out of bed daily and always try to be 10 years older than you actually are. Don't admit too quickly to feeling overwhelmed and learn how to calm yourself down. Offer your help when they give you a tired look, offer you companionship that will forever be permanent. Forget about the time that you want to yourself and take a moment to step around in someone else's shoes. Be frustratingly curious when you have to. Only break when you feel the burden of your own health. Always talk about the next time you'll see them, and the longing that you feel when they go away. Call back and leave a message if no one answers. Give away all the affection you wish to be given to you. Pray that it is a relief for someone else to hear your voice on the other line.

Appear

No one climbed on the table
to press their thumb to the glass
To squint and resist the morning
It won't blind them.

We all allow ourselves to say
That no errors can be replaced
And that clocks are thin
And make more time.
But something is missing
when we don't really care
Like the glow gone from
the eyes of a friend
who just finished a hand-made gift.
Wishing their message were read.

In a Big House

Today it is home where the fish tank makes noises
the family cannot find their cat and their daughter
wants to be lost too.
She wants to run away, but they will never let her leave
they only let her get mad.
By nighttime you cannot hear the fish tank anymore.
but you do hear three voices
and the girl didn't run away
but she is still thinking about it
when her mother leaves the room to feed the fish.

Mary

Ear muffs cover some of the sounds
as Mary pushes her cart
through the grocery store
her warm long coat covers her frail body
as she leans over the display to get
the last batch of her favorite muffins.

Mary is 68 years old.

She makes you want to wear ear muffs
she makes you want to talk to her
she makes you want to ask her questions
she makes you want to reconsider
you love Mary, without really knowing her
but you love her, you truly do.

PAULA JIMÉNEZ

translation from Spanish
Madeleine Stratford

San Juan

El viento golpeando en la roca, aridez y aspereza
entre los círculos que rodean la montaña,
un espiral que sube y busca el cielo.

Hermosura en el peligro
con su camino angosto, circundado por cardos
y flores punzantes y espinosas.

Yo las miro al pasar y me pregunto
en qué me diferencio de ellas
que para ser tocadas piden
a las manos que se acercan
su porción de dolor.

San Juan

Wind hitting the rocks, aridity, roughness
among the rings around the mountain,
a spiral that stretches towards the sky.
A beauty born of danger
its narrow path lined with thistles
and sharp, serrated blooms.
I look at them as I walk past, wondering
what sets me apart from those blooms
which require, to be touched,
that reaching hands
take their share of pain.

Camino del cuadrado

En el auto la voz de la cantante, sexual y dulce, indiferente a todo
ignora el polvo pegado a la garganta, el desierto que ves tras la ventana
y la sangre vieja que brota después de un invierno de mil años
en forma de manantial.

El Cuadrado Road

In the car the singer's voice, soft and sexual, utterly unconcerned
knows nothing of the dust clinging to your throat, the desert behind the
window or the brown blood that flows after a thousand years of winter
like a spring of water.

Desierto

El paisaje ondulante y antiquísimo, las fallas de la tierra
y el relato de un mundo derrumbado.
Nunca hubo nadie acá, por eso no hay tragedia en tus palabras
por eso es que no cae más que el viento
en la grieta de tu voz.
Apenas animales alborotados vuelan
con alas de murciélagos sobre la arcilla y la roca.
Todo esto era la nada
y la nada fue todo: cordilleras, glaciares, fondo acuático
petrificado al sol. La muerte persiguiendo
la vida y viceversa. Charlamos de estas cosas y otras más
en la intimidad del auto, tan lejos de tu boca
está la mía
donde antes hubo amor.

Desert

The waving landscape, ancient, the rifts in the earth,
the tale of a world now collapsed.
No one was ever here, which is why no tragedy fills your words
why nothing but the wind is falling
into the cracks of your voice.
Just a few wild creatures
are flying, bat-winged, over the rocks and clay.
All this was nothingness
and that was everything: cordilleras, glaciers, sun-petrified
seabed. Death pursuing life
life and vice versa. We talk about those and other things
in the car's intimacy, my own mouth so far
from yours
where there used to be love.

Reserva natural

Pero aún en el desasosiego
en el frío espantoso del corazón inesperado
tu mano
tu mano como un oro cálido
como un sol de oro cálido entre las montañas del camino
como un reblandecer que en el andar hacia la despedida
me ofrece agua, pan, lluvia, descanso.

Ya nada me sostiene frente a vos.
Podría perdonarlo todo
y todo volvería por sí mismo
como el destino de la mariposa misionera
que para olvidar la brevedad vuela
sin detenerse un instante. Pero es ella
y no yo, esa que vive
en la ignorancia de su oscuridad.

Natural Reserve

But even in times of unrest
in the frightful chill of the unexpected heart
your hand
your hand like warm gold
like a warm golden sun through the peaks along the road,
like a softness that, on the way to breaking up,
offers me water, bread, rain and rest.

Now I have nothing to lean on before you.
I could forgive it all
and it would still find its way back
like the missionary butterfly wishing
to escape brevity, doomed
to fly without a pause. But it is
the butterfly, not I, who lives
unaware of her own darkness.

La pareja

Donde el río fluía, ahora hay rocas.

La sequía tremenda de este año, los fósiles, las vacas flacas,
todo brillando bajo un sol acumulado
que amenaza convertirse en fuego.

En el camino una humareda sucia y al borde de la ruta
los pastos amarillos.

Asistimos al fin de un paisaje. A la desesperanza
de los que no tienen del agua
más que el recuerdo de una fascinación.

Two Lovers

There are rocks now where the river once flowed.
This year's tremendous drought, fossils, scrawny cows,
all glisten under a concentrated sun
threatening to turn to flames.
On the road a cloud of smoke and on each side
the yellow fields.
We just saw the end of a landscape. To the despair
of those who have, of the water,
lost all but the memory of an enthrallment.

Coroico (donde no fuimos)

Nos enteramos viendo un noticiero.
Por el Camino de la muerte cayeron los amantes.
Por el camino angosto de la muerte vuelto puro fango
tras la intensa lluvia de febrero. De pronto
en sus brazos rodó el mundo
una mezcla de hierro y de maleza se les metió en los ojos.
En sus miradas creció una liana
que ahora va de un tronco al otro como un péndulo
cargando sus corazones sin paz. En la selva
el cuerpo se desintegra envuelto en hojas
y se entierra por sí mismo, con ayuda del hambre de los pájaros.
No quisiera morir en la selva, te digo,
bajo la indiferencia de los monos que saltan de rama en rama
entre la exaltación y el enojo, siempre en lo alto,
lejos del dolor.

Coroico (where we haven't been)

We heard about it on the news.
Two lovers fell as they went on Death Road.
As they went on death's narrow road, now a total
mud bath in February's heavy rains. Suddenly
the world turned in their arms
a blend of iron and weeds blocked up their eyes.
A liana grew into their gaze
it now swings, pendulum-like, from one trunk to the next
holding their restless hearts. In the jungle
the body decays wrapped up in leaves
and digs its own grave, hungry birds helping.
I wouldn't want to die out in the jungle, I tell you,
around monkeys that couldn't care less, jumping from one branch
to the next, half-thrilled and half-angry, always up in the air,
far from the pain.

La garganta del diablo

Caer.

Ver a los pájaros traspasar la cortina
de agua violenta y entrar en sus nidos
urdidos en la piedra húmeda. Y escuchar
esa música de gotas o de notas que golpean
una contra otra, el sonar sin cesar de una caída.

Caer, mezclándonos con hojas,
con palillos, monedas, lo que el viento arrebató
de una mano. Caer sobre nosotras y volver
a caer

hasta diluirnos en una olla mansa.

¿Porqué tengo los ojos apretados, te pregunto,
la sal de los ojos contenida? Caer, caer, caer
y no sentir, amor
más que la inercia del olvido.

The Devil's Throat

To fall.

To see the birds fly through a curtain
of violent water and reach their nests
carved into the watery rock. And listen
to the music of water drops or notes plopping
against one another, the endless echo of a fall.

To fall, get ourselves tangled up
with leaves, twigs, coins, whatever the wind can
wrest away with ease. To fall over each other and
fall again

until we dissolve into a large cauldron.

Why are my lids tight shut, I ask you, why
is the salt of my eyes sealed? To fall, fall, fall
and feel nothing, my love
but the torpor of forgetting.

Japón

La tierra no da más. Los caminos se abren y se tragan
la vida breve. Esto es temblar. La estabilidad perdida.
Porque la tierra no da más, mi amor. El pecho abierto
como un león cazado, los colmillos inútiles, inútil su fiereza.
¿Resistirse? Aunque te aten de pies y de manos, aunque contenga
una pared el viento
se escaparía, de cualquier modo. Entonces, ¿con qué sentido?
¿cómo pedirle a la tierra que obedezca
al destino maleable
de las cosas chiquitas? Y más aún, me pregunto
mirando la luna desde mi cuarto, sola: ¿cómo puedo esperar
una quietud así de mi propio corazón?

Japan

The earth can't take it. Roads split open, swallowing
life short. That's what shaking is. Loosing stability.
Because the earth can't take it, my love. Chest open
like a lion caught in a hunt, its fangs and ferocity useless.
Why resist? Even if they bound your hands and feet, if a wall
contained the wind
it would slip away all the same. So what would be the point?
How can you ask the earth to surrender
to the pliable fate
of the tiniest things? What's more, I wonder
as I watch the moon from my room, alone: how can I expect
such peacefulness from my own heart?

Contributors

Josefina Báez is a performer, writer, educator, and theater director. Born and raised in La Romana, Dominican Republic, Baez eventually moved to New York in the early 70s, which is where she currently resides. In April 1986, Baez founded Ay Ombe Theatre and is the present Director. Some of her published work through Latinarte Publisher include: *Dominicanish* (2000) and *Comrade, Bliss Ain't Playing* (2013), *Levente no. Yolayorkdominicanyork* (2011), *Dramaturgia Ay Ombe I & II* (2011), and *Como la una Como una* (2011). Her work is multidisciplinary in context and transcultural in scope. Baez is also the creator of Performance Autology, a practical and inclusive artist work methodology.

Cynthia Cruz is a contemporary American poet. While born in Germany, Cruz grew up in northern California where she got her B.A. at Mills College. Cruz currently resides in Brooklyn, New York and teaches at Sarah Lawrence College, where earned her M.F.A, as well as at the Julliard School. Cruz's first book, *Ruin*, was published in 2006 by Alice James Books and her second collection, *The Glimmering Room*, was published in 2012 by Four Way Books.

Her work has been published in numerous literary journals and magazines including *The New Yorker*, the *American Poetry Review*, *Paris Review*, *Kenyon Review*, the *Boston Review*, and others. Cruz also writes two blogs, one about fashion and art. In addition to her achievements in the literary world, Cruz has dedicated time to teaching writing to children in the West Bank, in homeless shelters, and to women in the eating disorder ward of the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Annie Marshall is an up and coming poet from Gloucester, Massachusetts and a 2012 graduate of Syracuse University. To date Ms. Marshall has had her poetry and short stories published in the literary magazines; *Spark* of North Shore Community College and *Verbal Seduction* of Syracuse University.

Paula Jiménez (Argentina, 1969) is a writer and psychologist. She regularly contributes to literary supplements “Soy” and “Las 12” (Página/12), and “Diario Z,” and has been coordinating creative writing workshops since 2001. Her poetry books include *Ser feliz en Baltimore* (Nusud, 2001), *Formas* (Terraza, 2002), *la casa en la avenida* (Terraza, 2004), *la mala vida* (Bajo la Luna, 2007), *Ni jota* (Abeja Reina, 2008), *Espacios naturales* (Bajo la Luna, 2009), and *La vuelta*, soon to be published by Simulcoop. A selection of her short stories were published in Barcelona (Serena Ediciones, 2005 and 2006) and her first book of short fiction, *Pollera pantalón/cuentos de género*, came out in 2012 (La mariposa y la Iguana). She received several prestigious awards for her poetry, such as the National Literary Prize Tres de Febrero (1st place, 2006; 2nd place, 2008), the Hernández de Plata Prize (2006), the Hegoak Prize (Basque Country) for best LGBT short story (2nd place, 2007), as well as the National Fund of Arts Prize (1st place, 2008). Her work has appeared in various literary anthologies in Argentina as well as the rest of Latin America.

Translator

Madeleine Stratford is a professor of Translation at the Université du Québec en Outaouais (Gatineau). She has published articles in scholarly journals such as *TTR* and *Meta* (Canada), *MonTI* (Spain), *ReCIT* (Argentina), *AErea* (Chile), and *Point of Contact* (USA). She also wrote contributions for *Translating Women* (Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2011) and *Translation Peripheries. Paratextual Elements in Translation* (Peter Lang, 2011). She published literary translations in *Brèves littéraire* (2005), *Sojourn* (2006), *Calque* (2007) *Corresponding Voices* (2011) and *KIN* (2012), as well as in the anthologies *Si proche de Grenade* (Paris: Seghers, 2005) and *Days of Poetry and Wine* (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Študentska založba, 2010). Her first poetry book, *Des mots dans la neige*, was published in 2009 by Éditions Anagrammes (Perros-Guirec, France). Her French translation of *Ce qu'il faut dire a des fissures / Lo que hay que decir tiene grietas* by Uruguayan poet Tatiana Oroño was published in June 2012 by L'Oreille du Loup in Paris.

Four registers...

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